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## **County to Utilize Renewable Energy for Government Facilities**

LAKE COUNTY, IL – Lake County Board Members approved a resolution today, Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, to begin using renewable energy sources to supply electricity at its downtown Waukegan facilities and Des Plaines River Wastewater Treatment Plant. Lake County becomes a pioneer in the “Green Power” effort as the first county in the nation to commit to a renewable energy partnership.

The county board resolution authorizes a partnership with Environmental Resources Trust, which is facilitating the initiative for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The U.S. EPA implemented its Green Power Partnership Program to reduce the environmental impact of electricity generation.

Lake County is the second largest entity within the state of Illinois to utilize Green Power. The City of Chicago currently receives 20% of its energy for government facilities via its Green Power Partnership with the U.S. EPA.

Green Power is recycled electricity generated from solar, wind, biomass, small hydro, geothermal, biogas or wave sources. Lake County currently has access to biomass energy, which converts methane gas from landfills into fuel for energy.

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By entering into an agreement with the EPA, Lake County would require its energy supplier, Commonwealth Edison, to utilize 6% of the county's annual consumption of energy at its downtown Waukegan facilities and Des Plaines River Wastewater Treatment Plant from Green Power sources.

“By using Green Power, Lake County will move towards declining electricity and fuel costs while adding to the elimination of industrial air pollution,” said Lake County Board Chairman Suzi Schmidt. “The county will also hedge against volatile fuel prices.”

Lake County will pay a yearly charge of \$3,886.88 to purchase 720,000 kilowatts of renewable energy, approximately 6% of the county's annual energy usage of for its downtown Waukegan facilities and Des Plaines River Wastewater Treatment Plant. The average annual cost for supplying gas and electric fuel for Lake County's downtown Waukegan facilities currently ranges from \$1.6 million to \$2 million.

County officials hope to convert an entire facility to solar power within the next two years and would do so via grants covering 100% of the cost. Officials are also pursuing Green Power Partnerships for its other Department of Public Works wastewater treatment facilities.

According to Lake County Central Services Director Joni Young, “Our goal is to be self-sufficient in powering our buildings through recycled energy sources. This would equate to cost-savings in the range of \$10,000 to more than \$100,000 annually.”

The Lake County government consists of 23 elected board members, elected officials and over 2,800 permanent employees who provide leadership and services to over 600,000 Lake County residents.